

in the nation. As the Chief Deputy Supervisor of Elections, she is the highest ranking non-elected public servant in the office. She has served under four elected Supervisors through nine Presidential elections, 17 congressional and state elections and countless municipal and local district elections.

Ms. Kelly has mentored a generation of young people in the importance of protecting the process of voter registration and voter participation. If any Supervisor or Supervisor of Elections employee has a question from around the state, Ms. Kelly is on their speed dial and will always help find the answer or solution.

Today I ask this body to recognize Ms. Kelly as she begins her well-deserved retirement.

Ms. Kelly represents the best of public servants and I, along with the citizens of Palm Beach County and the State of Florida, thank her for her service protecting our right to vote and assuring that our vote counts.

THURSTON SMITH RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE-COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD FROM THE VVC FOUNDATION

HON. PAUL COOK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 26, 2018

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Thurston "Smitty" Smith, who was awarded the Distinguished Service-Community Service Award from the Victor Valley College Foundation on February 24, 2018.

Smitty was selected for this award because of his distinguished career as a public servant. As a former member of the Hesperia City Council, Smitty devoted countless hours of his time and expertise to economic and urban development of the city. He was instrumental in the completion of the Hesperia Civic Plaza Park, Rancho Underpass, and Rancho Bridge project. In addition to his work in Hesperia, Smitty serves on the Mojave Water Agency's Board of Directors, chairs the Victor Valley Bicycle Tour, and is active with several non-profit organizations.

On behalf of the U.S. House of Representatives, I would like to congratulate Thurston "Smitty" Smith for receiving the Distinguished Service-Community Service Award from the Victor Valley College Foundation. It is a well-deserved and long-overdue honor.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MS. KATE HITCHCOCK TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND CALIFORNIA'S 11TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT IN THE SPRING OF 2018

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 26, 2018

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional young woman who is spending the spring semester interning in my Washington, D.C. office. Ms. Kate Hitchcock came to our office as part of the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Programme

(UCWIP), and has been a valuable contributor to our efforts on behalf of California's Eleventh Congressional District.

Since 2000, UCWIP has worked with congressional offices to foster strong ties and understanding between the United States and Australian governments by bringing the best and the brightest from top Australian universities to intern on Capitol Hill. I am proud to be involved in this wonderful program for the third year in a row.

Kate Hitchcock, a student from the University of Canberra, has quickly proved herself to be a highly valuable member of our team. She has drafted legislative requests, attended briefings, written constituent mail, and researched important issues, among many other duties. She consistently displays a deep desire to learn and treats everyone she encounters with respect. Her hard work and dedication is an asset to our office and the Eleventh Congressional District.

Kate has learned about the United States and the U.S. Congress, and our team has learned a great deal from Kate about her native country. She is a pleasure to have in the office and I offer her my thanks for a job well done. I wish her the best of luck in all of her future endeavors.

INTRODUCTION OF THE UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ACT OF 2018

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 26, 2018

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce a bill similar to one I have introduced in five previous Congresses, the Universal Prekindergarten and Early Childhood Education Act of 2018. This bill is particularly important today because recent reports indicate that Americans are limiting the number of children they have due to the cost of child care. My bill begins the process of providing universal prekindergarten education in public and public charter schools in states that have or plan to phase in or are phasing in prekindergarten education for three- and four-year-old children. The District of Columbia has made considerable strides since I first introduced this bill, but today's bill is still needed to fill a hole in the "Every Student Succeeds Act," which addresses elementary and secondary education, but ignores the prekindergarten years, the most critical years for children's brain development. My bill also seeks a breakthrough in public education by providing the initial funding for states to encourage local school districts to add prekindergarten for children at three or four years of age, whereas kindergarten programs for five year olds are now routinely available in public schools. This bill would eliminate some of the major shortcomings of unevenly available "day care" and, importantly, would take advantage of the safe facilities required in public schools. Unless early education becomes a necessary part of a child's education, it almost surely will continue to be unavailable to the majority of families with children.

My bill provides federal funds to states, which must be matched by at least 20 percent

with the state's own funds, to establish or expand universal, voluntary prekindergarten in public and public charter schools for three- and four-year-olds, regardless of income. The classes, which would be full-day and run throughout the entire school year, must be taught by teachers who possess equivalent or similar qualifications to those teaching other grades in the school. The funds would supplement, not supplant, other federal funds for early childhood education. The unique money-saving aspect of my bill is that it uses the existing public school infrastructure and trained teachers to make early childhood education available to all, saving billions of dollars in its implementation.

The success of Head Start and other prekindergarten programs, combined with new scientific evidence concerning the importance of brain development in early childhood, virtually mandate the expansion of early childhood education to all children today. Early learning programs have been available only to the affluent, who can afford them, and to low-income families in programs such as Head Start, which would be unaffected by my bill. My bill provides a practical way to universal, public preschool education for the majority of families. The goal of the bill is to afford the benefits of early childhood education to the majority of the American working poor, lower-middle-class and middle-class families, most of whom have been left out of this essential education for their children.

We cannot afford to continue to allow the most fertile years for childhood development to pass, only to wonder why a child cannot read. The bill responds both to the great needs of parents who seek early childhood education, as well as to today's brain science, which shows that a child's brain development begins much earlier than had been previously understood.

Considering the staggering cost of day care, the inaccessibility of early childhood education and the opportunity that early education offers to improve a child's chances of success, schooling for three- and four-year-olds is overdue. The absence of viable options for working families demands our immediate attention.

My bill reflects what jurisdictions throughout the nation increasingly are trying to accomplish. The District of Columbia, for example, has achieved an extensive integration of early childhood education as part of a larger effort to improve D.C. public schools. A recent report highlighted the economic benefits of early childhood education, emphasizing its role in expanding job opportunities and decreasing the amount of money spent on programs to address teen pregnancy, crime and the like.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

FRED HUNTER RECEIVE PRESIDENT'S AWARD FROM THE VVC FOUNDATION

HON. PAUL COOK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 26, 2018

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Fred Hunter, who received the President's Award from the Victor Valley College Foundation on February 24, 2018.